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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 1280 (Substitute S-1)
Sponsor: Senator Patricia L. Birkholz
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 6-15-04

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 741 (State Parks System) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to create the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks, which would be required to recommend parks policy, provide guidance, educate the public, and perform other tasks.

Membership

The Committee would consist of 17 individuals appointed by the Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and with the advice of the Natural Resources Commission.

The first members would have to be appointed within 60 days after the bill's effective date. Of the first members appointed, six would serve for four years, six would serve for three years, and five would serve for two years. Subsequently appointed members would serve four-year terms.

Upon a majority vote of the members, the Committee could remove a member for incompetency, dereliction of duty, malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, or any other good cause. A member would have to be removed from the Committee if he or she did not attend four consecutive Committee meetings.

Members would serve without compensation, but could be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as Committee members.

Duties

The Committee would have to do all of the following:

- Advise and make recommendations to the Governor, the Commission, and the Legislature on State parks policy and provide guidance on State parks development, management, and planning issues.
- Seek the development of a broad variety of programs, facilities, and services for citizens using State parks.
- Inform and educate the public about the importance of and need for State parks.
- Strive to involve citizens in the planning and development of State parks.
- Strive to ensure that the facilities, programs, and projects were barrier-free and accessible to all citizens.

- Establish and maintain effective public relations regarding State parks, using all appropriate communications media.
- Advise on financial planning and pursue adequate budget support for State parks.
- Serve as a liaison and coordinate with other agencies to ensure a cooperative effort to provide the most effective and economical service possible at State parks.
- Evaluate the State parks' programs, facilities, services, and relationships periodically to assure that the Committee's goals and objectives were being achieved.
- Advise and make recommendations to the DNR on the Gem of the Parks Award, the State Parks Volunteer of the Year Award, and the State Parks Employee of the Year Award (all of which would be established by Senate Bill 1281).

Procedures

The DNR Director would have to call the first Committee meeting, at which the Committee would have to elect from among its members a chairperson and other officers as it considered necessary or appropriate. After the first meeting, the Committee would have to meet at least twice a year, or more frequently at the call of the chair, or if requested by nine or more members.

Six members would constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a Committee meeting. A majority of the members present and serving would be required for official Committee action.

The chairperson of the Committee would have to ensure that all of the Committee's proposed policy positions were sent to Committee members at least one week before the meeting at which the policy position would be acted on. The Committee could adopt an emergency resolution that had not been sent to members at least one week before a Committee meeting, but only upon the approval of three-quarters of those present at the meeting.

The Committee would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

MCL 324.74101 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Claire Layman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would result in minimal expenses related to reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses incurred by members of the Committee.

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

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